

REEL COTTON

CODE OF CONDUCT 3.1



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REEL Cotton Code of Conduct 3.1

The Responsible Environment Enhanced Livelihoods Cotton (REEL Cotton) is a business-driven initiative lead by CottonConnect, for brands which are committed to sourcing more sustainable cotton whilst improving environmental, quality and traceability conditions in their supply chain factories and farms worldwide. CottonConnect unites committed brands and their supply chains around a development-oriented system environment in the sourcing countries. The present REEL Cotton Code of Conduct Version 3.1 aims at setting up the codes and conducts that the REEL Cotton Stakeholders endeavour to implement in their supply chains. It overrules the REEL Cotton Code of Conduct Version 3.0.

The REEL Cotton Code of Conduct consists of three major sections of information along with an annexure document:

Section 1: Introduction, Purpose, Scope and Applicability

Section 2: Code of Conduct

Section 3: REEL Glossary

Annexes: REEL Cotton Code List of Prohibited Chemicals

The REEL Cotton Code of Conduct version 3.1 entered into business with effect from cropping season 2023 onwards.



What is New in Version 3.1

NEWLY ADDED CONDUCTS

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- 1.5.2.1 & 1.5.2.2 Introduced policies, procedures, and responsibilities for key conduct within the code.
 - 1.6.2.1.5 Verification of training records.
 - 1.8.1.2 & 1.8.1.3 Training need assessment and documenting the assessment results.
 - 4.2.1.3 Pesticide selection based on toxicity.
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UPDATED AND REWORDED CONDUCTS

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- 1.1.1.1 Emphasized the importance of a written agreement.
 - 2.1.1.1 Enhanced guidelines for cotton variety selection.
 - 4.2.2.2 Strengthened the prohibition of banned pesticides as per international conventions.
 - 9.2.1.2 Incorporated the specification that no requirement fees are to be paid.
 - 9.3.1.1 & 9.3.1.2 The minimum working age has been adjusted to 14 years, aligning it consistently across both gin and REEL CoC.
 - 9.5.1.4 Ensured access to potable drinking water at farms.
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REMOVED CONDUCTS

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- 1.6.2.1.5 Removed the requirement for maintaining proof of the mark of each farmer.
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The updates in REEL Cotton 3.1 focus on improving existing guidelines based on the feedback given by the stakeholders.

STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

We have extended invitations to approximately 24 stakeholders representing 13 diverse sectors to review the Code and provide their valuable feedback for its further development. These stakeholders have actively participated from various regions, ensuring a comprehensive and practical approach to enhance its robustness and suitability for implementation.

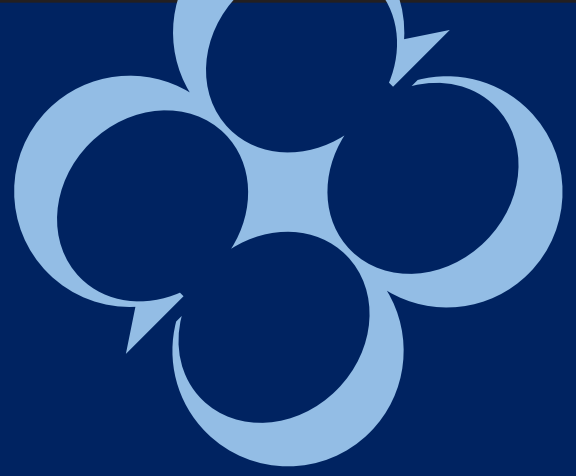
LANGUAGES

As of now the REEL Cotton Code of Conduct is available in English version only. The REEL Cotton Code of Conduct will be made available in Chinese, Turkish, Bengali, Urdu, Gujarati, Marathi, Hindi, Telugu, and Tamil languages. If you would like to translate the REEL Cotton Code of Conduct into an additional language, please contact CottonConnect at info@cottonconnect.org for guidance on translations.

GUIDELINES AND SOPS

Some related documents are available on the CottonConnect website for implementation are:

- REEL Cotton – Strategic Plan
- Monitoring and Evaluation Process and Verification Mechanisms
- REEL Chain of Custody and Traceability Framework
- REEL Cotton Code of Conduct and Verification Process
- REEL Regenerative Theory of Change
- REEL Cotton Handbook – Accountability and Assurance



Section 1: Purpose, Scope, Applicability and Disclosure Obligations

Section 1: Purpose, Scope, Applicability and Disclosure Obligations

The REEL Cotton Code of Conduct is a private code of sustainable agricultural practices with a portion to cover traceability and decent working conditions and is internationally organised as a model sustainability programme code by the brands and retailers. Many retailers and brands have adopted the REEL Cotton Code of Conduct and have committed to make sure that their producers work towards full compliance over time. Brands / buyers commit to either implement it fully or incorporate it into their own company programmes.

PURPOSE

The intent of REEL Cotton Code of Conduct is to provide a verifiable, private standard, based on the REEL Cotton Sustainable Agricultural Practices Handbook with additions to cover the entire environmental facet. It is intended that an organisation shall comply with this Code of Conduct through an appropriate and effective management system which will result in reduced input cost, reduced use of chemicals, reduced use of fertiliser, reduced use of water, increased soil fertility and establish the habit of tracking profitability of farming.

SCOPE

The scope of the REEL Cotton Code of Conduct version 3.1 is based on sustainable agricultural practices covering the whole ecological aspect with some additional social and development elements.

The scope of geography of the REEL Cotton sourcing programme currently covers the farms and processing of REEL Cotton producing countries including India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, China, Turkey, and Egypt.

APPLICABILITY

The current development of the code is based on the Indian agricultural sector and is aimed to be universally applicable to every type of organisation in the REEL Cotton supply chain, right from the farm to ginning, regardless of its size, geographic location or type/variety of cotton. But still the applicability of some practices in each country needs to be explored for its relevance and fit with cultural and governmental practices.

DISCLOSURE OBLIGATIONS

None of the requirements of this code limits or expands disclosure obligations under any central/federal, state, tribal, or local law, to provide all legally required notices with respect to the discovery of releases of hazardous substances and disposal of hazardous wastes. It is the obligation of each member in the supply chain, conducting the inquiry to determine his or her respective disclosure obligations under central/federal, state, tribal, and local law and to comply with such disclosure requirements.

STRUCTURE OF REEL COTTON CODE OF CONDUCT

The structure of the REEL Cotton Code version 3.1 generally follows a hierarchical organization, divided into sections and sub-sections, with each addressing specific aspects related to sustainable and responsible cotton production. Here's an outline of its typical structure:

Main chapters: the REEL Cotton Code of Conduct 3.1 is built around nine principles which are the main chapters.

1. Integrated Management System
2. Plant and Field Management
3. Soil and Integrated Nutrient Management
4. Pest Management
5. Water Management
6. Ecosystem Protection
7. Waste Management
8. Institutional Building
9. Social Condition

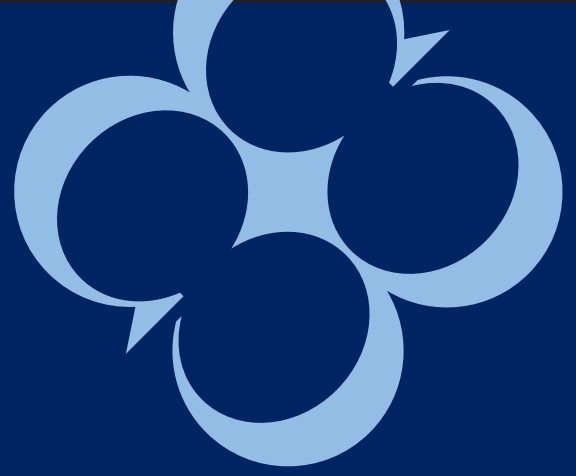
Sub-sections within each chapter: Each main chapter includes subsections that goes deeper into specific practices, guidelines, or principles related to that aspect of cotton production.

Codes and requirements: Each sub-section typically contains individual codes or requirements, each representing a specific guideline or practice. The codes may include practices to adopt, criteria to meet, or prohibitions to adhere to for sustainable cotton cultivation.

THE REEL COTTON CODE OF CONDUCT IS BUILT AROUND NINE PRINCIPLES DISPLAYED IN THE IMAGE BELOW:



The REEL Cotton Code of Conduct specifically concerns sustainable agriculture practices. REEL Cotton Code of Conduct does not cover organic, food safety or other similar concerns.



Section 2: REEL Cotton Code of Conduct 3.1

1 Integrated Management System



1.1 CONTRACTS AND AGREEMENTS

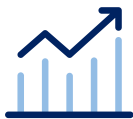
1.1.1 Written contracts, memberships and agreements shall be in place at all levels.

- 1.1.1.1 A written agreement between the implementation partner and CottonConnect shall be maintained.
- 1.1.1.2 A written agreement between the producer group (implementation partners) and farmers shall be maintained.
- 1.1.1.3 There is an agreement between ginners, producer group/implementation party, and CottonConnect that defines among others the purchase requirements.

1.2 PRODUCER GROUP SET UP

1.2.1 A producer group structure shall be implemented, and the communication strategies with farmer members (capacity building, first and second level facilitation) described in detail.

- 1.2.1.1 The producer group's structure and communication shall be described in detail.
- 1.2.1.2 The producer group shall not exceed 30 members in Bangladesh or 50 farmers in remaining of origins. The mode of operation, group leaders and communication places shall be mentioned.
- 1.2.1.3 A detailed documented farmer's profile (FFB) shall be maintained.
- 1.2.1.4 The Farmers Field Book (FFB) of control farmers and relevant data capturing, storage and retrieval system shall be in place for comparison of REEL Cotton farmers.
- 1.2.1.5 A communication or document on implementation of decent work at the farm/farmers in place.



1.3 DOCUMENTATION & INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

1.3.1 A system shall be in place on documentation & information management to record, collect, collate, store, extract and report the data required for the programme needs.

- 1.3.1.1 An updated REEL Cotton programme plan shall be in place.
- 1.3.1.2 Evidences of implementation/progress of the programme shall be documented and maintained.
- 1.3.1.3 Results indicators are periodically reported, and records shall be maintained.
- 1.3.1.4 Monthly Performance Reports (MPR) are submitted.
- 1.3.1.5 Quarterly progress reports are submitted.
- 1.3.1.6 Data storage or records, and retrievability shall be demonstrated at the respective stakeholder level.
- 1.3.1.7 Producer group information shall be available to the nearest local partner, cotton unit or CDB zonal office.



1.4 QUALITY, TRACEABILITY & TERMS OF TRADE

1.4.1 Farmers adopt quality and traceability practices at pre harvesting, harvesting, post harvesting handling and storage.

- 1.4.1.1 Farmers adopt proper crop harvest management techniques, timing, and judgement.
- 1.4.1.2 Cotton is prevented from being contaminated with foreign material during and after picking.
- 1.4.1.3 Incidence of seed cotton with poor quality is physically monitored for noncontamination
- 1.4.1.4 REEL Cotton product flow shall be documented up to the ginner level and maintained.

1.4.2. Quality and traceability system at ginner level shall be in place.

- 1.4.2.1 Ginners shall maintain separate heaps for REEL seed cotton to avoid contamination.
- 1.4.2.2 Ginners shall maintain separate storage spaces for lint cotton.
- 1.4.2.3 Competent traceability tools (TraceBale) and techniques shall be accessible at the ginner level.
- 1.4.2.4 The ginner shall demonstrate the separation, physical traceability, and document traceability of the REEL Cotton against a particular Bale ID.

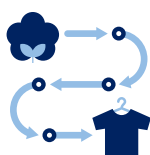


1.4.3 Ginning operation guide shall be developed.

- 1.4.3.1 Harvesting guideline for producer group shall be developed and provided.

1.4.4 Clear terms of trade between trading partners (farmer, producer group and ginners)

- 1.4.4.1 There are purchase contracts and/or purchase orders between producer groups and ginners that clearly indicate: agreed volumes, quality, price, payment terms, and delivery condition.
- 1.4.4.2 No trading partner is paid for sales below the reference price. In other words, the price agreed between parties (farmer and producer group; and producer group and ginners) shall follow, at least, the regional reference prices for the product being traded.



1.5 INTERNAL VERIFICATION

1.5.1 Three levels of verification system shall be in place for effective implementation of the programme.

- 1.5.1.1 A first level internal verification system shall be in place at the producer group level to monitor the implementation of the programme at the farmer level.
- 1.5.1.2 A second level internal verification system shall be in place at the national network level to monitor the implementation of the programme at the producer group level and ginner level.
- 1.5.1.3 A third level internal verification system shall be in place at the international level to monitor the implementation of the programme at the national network level.

1.5.2 Policies, procedures, and responsibilities for the most relevant conducts of the code.

- 1.5.2.1 The implementation partner has a documented policy and defined procedures for compliance with each of the following chapters of the code:
 - Chapter 4: Pest Management (prohibition of hazardous chemicals)
 - Chapter 5: Water Management (water use efficiency and stewardship)
 - Chapter 9: Social Conditions (child labour, sexual harassment, forced labour, working time, occupational health and safety, collective bargaining, equal and fair wages)
- 1.5.2.2 The implementation partner has designated a responsible person to implement the policy and related procedures. The responsible is aware of his responsibilities and has sufficient resources to conduct the defined activities.



1.6 TRAINING

1.6.1 Training of Trainers (ToT)

1.6.1.1 Producer group – A system shall be in place to recruit, train, and monitor the performance of the trainers.

- 1.6.1.1.1 Training of trainers shall be achieved through national networks or institutions (REEL Cotton India) in collaboration with national agriculture science centres.
- 1.6.1.1.2 The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the training institutes and/or training procedure, when applicable, and the annual training plan and record of attendance shall be maintained.
- 1.6.1.1.3 Training of trainers shall cover all modules including, Module 1 REEL Cotton Programme, Module 2 Pre-Sowing of REEL Cotton, Module 3 Crop Management (Integrated Water Management, Integrated Pest Management, Integrated Nutrient Management, decent work, health, safety, security, and environment).

1.6.1.2 Ginner – Training of ginners shall be through national networks.

- 1.6.1.2.1 Training of ginners shall be achieved through producer groups (implementation partners) /national networks (REEL Cotton India).
- 1.6.1.2.2 The annual training plan and record of attendance of ginning staff shall be maintained.
- 1.6.1.2.3 The training of ginners shall cover 4 modules: 1. Programmatic training, 2. Quality, 3. Traceability Management system, and 4. HSSE (Health, Safety, Security and Environment).

1.6.2 Training of Farmers (ToF)

1.6.2.1 A system shall be in place to train and monitor the training performance of the farmers.

- 1.6.2.1.1 Training of farmers shall be achieved through producer groups (implementation partners).
- 1.6.2.1.2 An annual training plan and record of attendance of all farmers shall be maintained.
- 1.6.2.1.3 The training of farmers shall cover all relevant training modules including 1. Programmatic training, 2. Module 1: Pre-sowing, 3. Module 2: IWM, IPM and INM, 4. Module 3: Contamination free picking, storage and marketing, 5. Health, safety, security and environment, 6. Decent work, 7. Documentation, 8. Drip and micro irrigation system, 9. Importance group-cooperative society and farmer producer company, 10, 11, 12. Need based trainings.
- 1.6.2.1.4 Planning of trainings takes into consideration evaluations of previous years' trainings and insights provided by CottonConnect on the yield, quality and costs of production.
- 1.6.2.1.5 Verification of training records have evidenced that farmers with more than one year in the programme have participated in all relevant training modules.
- 1.6.2.1.6 Farmers shall be aware of and committed to quality and traceability requirements.



1.7 FIRST LEVEL FACILITATION (FARMER GROUP MEETINGS, INDIVIDUAL FARMER MEETINGS, INDIVIDUAL FARM VISITS, AND DEMONSTRATION)

1.7.1 First level facilitation is provided to the farmers in form of group meetings, demonstration plots, exposure visits and individual farm visits.

- 1.7.1.1 For each group of farmers one quarterly group meeting is conducted on all relevant topics addressed in the module training.
- 1.7.1.2 One demonstration plot for a specific training module/practice shall be established as per requirement of the local group.
- 1.7.1.3 Exposure is facilitated at least once during the lifetime of the demo.
- 1.7.1.4 Each farmer should be visited at least once in a month during the following crop stages: 1) germination and emergence, 2) leaf area and canopy development, 3) flowering and boll development, 4) maturation, and 5) harvesting.

1.7.2 First level facilitation is recorded and attendance is registered.

- 1.7.2.1 Farmer meetings are minuted.
- 1.7.2.2 Attendance lists are available.
- 1.7.2.3 Individual farm visits are recorded.
- 1.7.2.4 Demonstrations and exposure visits are recorded and attendance is registered.

1.7.3 Verification of training records has evidenced that 100% of farmers have participated in all first level methods of facilitation, and proof of participation is available.

- 1.7.3.1 All farmers with more than one year in the programme have participated at least once in each of the first level facilitation exercises (group meetings, demo/exposure, individual field visits).



1.8 SECOND LEVEL FACILITATION

1.8.1 Mapping exercise conducted to identify needs and priorities of each farmer group.

- 1.8.1.1 Needs assessment of farmers under the scope of the implementation partner are conducted in the first and third years of the programme.
- 1.8.1.2 The needs assessment/ training need is focused on all areas of the code: 1. Integrated Management System, 2. Plant and Field Management, 3. Soil and Integrated Nutrient Management, 4. Pest Management, 5. Water Management, 6. Ecosystem Protection, 7. Waste Management, 8. Institutional building, and 9. Social Conditions.
- 1.8.1.3 The results of the need assessment/training are presented at the producer group level.



1.8.2 Based on the mapping exercises, linkages have been built to the relevant third-party bodies.

- 1.8.2.1 Farmers are linked to certified or recognised laboratories offering soil analysis.
- 1.8.2.2 Farmers are incentivised to adopt water recharging practices.

1.8.3 Farmers have been provided with sufficient and updated information on the types and biology of pests, diseases, weeds, and natural enemies, on alternative products that can substitute internationally banned pesticides, and found in possession of means for adoption of biological and cultural control measures.

- 1.8.3.1 Lists of relevant pests, diseases and weeds are available for the project area.
- 1.8.3.2 Basic information about pests, diseases and weeds is collected during pre-sowing and post-harvest stages.
- 1.8.3.3 Farmers have been demonstrated how to manufacture biological pesticides on their own.
- 1.8.3.4 Mapping of pesticides with retailers and inquiries with research bodies are successful in providing farmers with phytosanitary products that can substitute internationally banned pesticides with the same efficacy.
- 1.8.3.5 Farmers innovative/local control measures on pest and diseases shall be maintained and tested in other groups.

1.8.4 The cotton farmer can demonstrate that he/she understands the concept of Integrated Nutrient Management (INM) and how the soil plays into it.

- 1.8.4.1 Farmers understand all aspects of INM disseminated by the REEL programme and know how to replicate INM enhancing measures in their own farms. INM should be documented and their enhancing measures properly communicated, implemented, and documented.
 - 1.8.4.2 Leaf colour chart and other IEC material related soil/nutrient deficiency shall be available to the farmer groups.
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2 Plant and Field Management



2.1 PLANT

2.1.1 Producers understand the full concept of resilience, are able to implement it against pests, and able to judge their economic viability.

- 2.1.1.1 Variety or characteristics of cotton crop follows recommendations from local experts.
- 2.1.1.2 Seed material has been treated with pesticide or fungicide by the seed supplier or farmer.
- 2.1.1.3 No prohibited chemical has been used for seed treatment at the farm level.
- 2.1.1.4 Farmers maintain plant population and gap filling.
- 2.1.1.5 Farmers maintain seed rate to achieve desired plant populations to be used for gap filling.



2.2 FIELD

2.2.1 The producer adopts measures to improve the production system's resilience against pests.

- 2.2.1.1 Cotton cultivation is not done in protected designated areas.
 - 2.2.1.2 Deep tillage and ploughing are carried out by farmers every two to three years.
 - 2.2.1.3 Farmers are encouraged to adopt locally adapted and viable crop rotation on part of cotton land.
 - 2.2.1.4 Farmers do regular weed control to keep fields clean.
 - 2.2.1.5 Farmers adopts green mulching and or dust mulching based on needs for phytosanitary purposes and/or conserving humidity.
 - 2.2.1.6 Farmers adopts plastic mulching based on needs for phytosanitary purposes and/or conserving humidity.
 - 2.2.1.7 Existing natural habitats for natural enemies of pests are protected.
 - 2.2.1.8 Natural habitats for natural enemies are developed if absent.
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3 Soil and Integrated Nutrient Management



3.1 SOIL FERTILITY

3.1.1 Cotton farmers adopt measures to increase soil fertility.

- 3.1.1.1 Burning of crop residues in the field is not practiced.
- 3.1.1.2 Cotton residues in the field are incorporated as organic Fertilisers.
- 3.1.1.3 If available, biogas slurry is brought out onto the field.
- 3.1.1.4 Cotton is intercropped with nitrogen-fixing or other protective plants.
- 3.1.1.5 Farmers are encouraged to produce compost, vermicompost, Farmyard Manure and others by their own initiatives.

3.2 SOIL EROSION

3.2.1 Appropriate measures are implemented to avoid erosion of the soil.

- 3.2.1.1 Land preparation follows contour lines in hilly or sloppy lands.
- 3.2.1.2 Soil-specific tillage methods suggested in training modules 1 (Pre-Sowing), and 2 (IWM, IPM, and INM) are adopted to prevent soil compaction.
- 3.2.1.3 Irrigation methods do not disturb the structure of the soil.
- 3.2.1.4 Where applicable, living barriers support the stability of the soil.



3.3 INTEGRATED FERTILISER MANAGEMENT

3.3.1 Fertiliser application is based on evaluation of needs by taking soil-borne nutrients, soil conditions and input from non-mineral sources into account.

- 3.3.1.1 Soil and/or leaf analysis, when feasible, are carried out on a regular basis (every three to four years).
- 3.3.1.2 Farmers adopt the practice of applying Farm Yard Manure (FYM) and/or compost. When feasible, bio-fertilisers are applied.
- 3.3.1.3 Soil conditions, in particular organic matter, when available are considered before mineral Fertiliser.
- 3.3.1.4 Organic fertiliser available on the farm is not exported from the farm.
- 3.3.1.5 Farmers apply micro nutrients based, when available, on the soil/leaf testing or plant symptoms (colour system).

3.3.2 Safe use and storage of fertiliser – use methods and storage practices ensure that fertilisation does not constitute a source of water pollution and a health risk for those who apply them.

- 3.3.2.1 Fertiliser applications are domesticated as per local requirements and based upon the soil analyses.
- 3.3.2.2 Organic fertilisers are not stored in proximity to surface water bodies.
- 3.3.2.3 When applying fertiliser, reasonable buffer is maintained to surface water bodies specific to the type of fertiliser.

4 Pest Management



4.1 INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT

4.1.1 Crop hygiene is safeguarded through preventive cultural means.

- 4.1.1.1 Diseased plants are removed to maintain healthy crops.
- 4.1.1.2 Management of natural enemies and other integrated pest management techniques is incentivised, and known by the farmer.
- 4.1.1.3 Cage crops, molasses trap, yellow trap, pheromone trap, and light traps, when feasible are adopted to control pests.
- 4.1.1.4 Water used for irrigation is clean.

4.1.2 Monitoring to determine the economic threshold of pests and time of application is practiced.

- 4.1.2.1 The cotton producer scouts and monitors pest attack.
- 4.1.2.2 When feasible, farmers use pheromone traps for identification of pests with the aim to ensure targeted pesticide use.
- 4.1.2.3 Economic injury levels and action thresholds are respected.

4.1.3 Farmers have been encouraged to recur to herbicides as a last resort.

- 4.1.3.1 Weed control is done manually and/or mechanically.
- 4.1.3.2 Farmers are encouraged not to use herbicides.
- 4.1.3.3 Application of herbicide use is reduced over time.

4.1.4 Cultural, physical and biological measures are applied before resorting to chemical pest control (only applicable if scouting has shown pest infestation).

- 4.1.4.1 Farmers shall plant cotton along with boarder crop and trap crop.
 - 4.1.4.2 At least one cultural measure to control pests has been adopted (e.g., bird perches; traps (pheromone), etc.).
 - 4.1.4.3 At least one biological methods (e.g., release and augmentation of natural enemies; use of microbial products; use of natural products/biological pesticides; organic pest repellents (e.g., neem extract) has been considered.
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4.2 PESTICIDE USE

4.2.1 REEL farmers strive to reduce the amounts of pesticides over time, records of pesticide use are available.

- 4.2.1.1 Farmers keep records of types and amounts of pesticides used, pests and pesticide details in the FFB.
- 4.2.1.2 With help of use records and inventories farmers can demonstrate that pesticide application use has a downward trend and is carried as needed.
- 4.2.1.3 The selection of pesticide with lowest toxicity level is preferred by farmers.

4.2.2 WHO Class Ia and Ib substances and those banned by international conventions (POP/PIC/Montreal/Stockholm) are not used.

- 4.2.2.1 Cotton farmers do not use pesticides containing substances listed in WHO Classes Ia and Ib.
- 4.2.2.2 Cotton farmers do not use any substances listed by the international protocols or governance bodies that Cotton Connects follows as prohibited chemicals: WHO, POP, PIC, Montreal (see annex of the code for links to each of these lists).
- 4.2.2.3 List of locally available safe pesticide shall be provided to the farmer groups.

4.2.3 Substances that figure on the REEL Prohibited Pesticide List have out phased.

- 4.2.3.1 Cotton farmers do not use substances contained on the REEL Prohibited Pesticide List.

4.2.4 Pesticides are officially registered in the country, and crop and pest specificity are warranted.

- 4.2.4.1 Cotton farmers only use pesticides that are officially registered in the country.
- 4.2.4.2 Crop specificity of used pesticides is guaranteed.
- 4.2.4.3 Pesticide used is specifically recommended for combatting the target pest.



4.3 SAFE HANDLING

4.3.1 Pesticides are safely stored, handled and disposed.

- 4.3.1.1 Pesticides are safely stored and out of children's reach.
- 4.3.1.2 For spraying, farmers use appropriate personal protective equipment.
- 4.3.1.3 Pesticide containers shall not be stored, handled, emptied, disposed of, or left unattended in a manner that may present a hazard to persons, animals, food, feed, crops or property.

5 Water Management



5.1 SUSTAINABLE WATER SOURCES

5.1.1 Sources of water for irrigation of cotton fields stems are identified and preserved.

- 5.1.1.1 The owner of the land has identified all water sources for irrigation of cotton fields.
- 5.1.1.2 The cotton farmer is clear about the volumes that can be used to avoid depletion of the source(s).
- 5.1.1.3 Water availability from the chosen source(s) is sufficient since the start of cotton production.
- 5.1.1.4 The cotton farmer can demonstrate that he/she is legally authorised to extract water.

5.1.2 Producer groups adopt initiatives to preserve source of water

- 5.1.2.1 Producer group initiatives dialogue with other stakeholders to conserve sources of water that are in critical stage or overused.
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5.2 QUALITY OF IRRIGATION WATER

5.2.1 The water used for irrigation of cotton fields is safe for crop, soil and human health

- 5.2.1.1 Untreated sewage water is not used in the cotton fields.
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5.3 SUSTAINABLE USE OF WATER

5.3.1 Measures to optimise water use for irrigation of cotton fields have been adopted.

- 5.3.1.1 The cotton farmer has a good understanding of the watering needs of cotton.
 - 5.3.1.2 The rainfall pattern has been taken into account when watering cotton fields.
 - 5.3.1.3 The timing of irrigation follows physiological requirements of the cotton plant.
 - 5.3.1.4 Farmers recall to the volume of water used for irrigation.
 - 5.3.1.5 The most effective irrigation method that is available in the region and affordable to the cotton farmer is being used.
 - 5.3.1.6 The irrigation equipment is properly maintained.
 - 5.3.1.7 Follow appropriate method of water discharge/drainage during heavy rainfall or flood.
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6 Ecosystem Protection



6.1 FOREST CONSERVATION

6.1.1 New lands for cotton cultivation will not be developed through deforestation or on protected land.

- 6.1.1.1 Primary forest and land protected by law are not destroyed for the purpose of cotton cultivation.
- 6.1.1.2 Secondary forest > 10 years old will not be deforested with the purpose to gain new land for cotton cultivation.
- 6.1.1.3 For secondary forest < 10 years old and trees around the farm, compensation has been sought in equivalent amount (restoration measures on unproductive land).

6.2 BUFFER ZONES

6.2.1 Cotton production respects ecological sensitive areas by keeping buffers that are sufficiently sized. There are visible signs that these areas have been actively restored.

- 6.2.1.1 When applicable, the farmer maintains buffer zones between his explorations and ecologically sensitive areas. Such buffer zones are in line with local legislation.
- 6.2.1.2 Ecological buffers are left untouched.
- 6.2.1.3 Naked buffers are actively restored through reforestation or other protective measures that allow natural regrowth without human or animal interference.

6.2.2 Buffers to public areas like roads and human settlements are maintained.

- 6.2.2.1 The cotton farmer keeps safe distances to public roads and houses when applying chemicals.
- 6.2.2.2 In case safe distances cannot be maintained, vegetative buffers account for public safety.



6.3 ECOLOGICAL COMPENSATION

6.3.1 The cotton farmer actively contributes to restoring unproductive land.

- 6.3.1.1 Unproductive land is not converted into cotton fields.
- 6.3.1.2 The cotton farmer can demonstrate that measures have been implemented to restore the natural vegetation.
- 6.3.1.3 Cotton farmer groups contribute to plantation of tree cotton and silk cotton in their locality.

6.4 AGROBIODIVERSITY

6.4.1 Cotton farmers diversify their production system to increase environmental and economic sustainability.

- 6.4.1.1 Crop rotation systems are designed based on the socio-economic situation of the cotton farmer (e.g., availability of land, irrigation).
- 6.4.1.2 Cotton is intercrop with other cultures.

7 Waste Management



7.1 RECYCLABLE WASTE

7.1.1 Farmers are encouraged to reintroduce the organic waste from cotton fields into the farm.

- 7.1.1.1 Crop residues are reused or left on the field, but not burnt.
 - 7.1.1.2 If crop residues are used as fodder, it is fed to own animals, and the manure is reintroduced into the cotton fields.
 - 7.1.1.3 When fed to animals, the required waiting period since last pesticide application is safeguarded.
 - 7.1.1.4 Manure is in an advanced stage of decomposition when applied.
-

7.2 HAZARDOUS WASTE

7.2.1 The cotton farmer shall demonstrate that the farm is free of hazardous waste and that disposal techniques are appropriate for the identified waste.

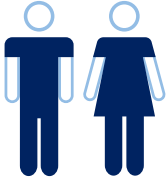
- 7.2.1.1 The cotton farmer has identified hazardous waste on the farm/house/sheds.
 - 7.2.1.2 Farm premises and fields are free of inorganic waste.
 - 7.2.1.3 Appropriate disposal techniques are employed that do not harm the environment and human health.
-

8 Institutional Building

8.1 PROGRESS TOWARDS EVOLVEMENT OF FORMALISED ORGANISATION SET UP (SHGS, COOPERATIVE, PRODUCER COMPANY ETC.) SHALL BE EVIDENCED

- 8.1.1.1 Mechanisms of registering/formalising the farmer organisation are in the process of being developed.
-

9 Social Conditions



9.1 FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION (ILO 87) & COLLECTIVE BARGAINING (ILO 98)

9.1.1 Management of farms with > 10 full or part-time permanent workers recognise in writing and in practice the right of all workers to establish and to join worker organisations of their own choosing and to collectively negotiate their working conditions.

9.1.1.1 Management shall respect the right of all workers to form or to join a trade union or informal labour group of their choice and to engage in the activities of the trade union on-site, in case available.

9.1.1.2 Workers shall have the right to choose their representative at any level.

9.1.2 If no active and representative union exists on farms with > 10 full or part-time permanent workers, all workers shall democratically elect a worker' committee, which represents them and negotiates with management to defend their rights and interests.

9.1.2.1 Worker committees shall be established to defend workers' rights and interests, if trade union are absent on-site or in the area.

9.1.2.2 Workers' committee shall be democratically elected by workers to represent their interests and negotiate with management.

9.1.3 Workers are not subject to retaliation, disclination or any other negative consequences as a result of collective bargaining.

9.1.3.1 The union representative shall have access to all workers at the workplace.

9.1.3.2 The union representative shall be aware of the appeal procedure in case that management does not obey to legal rules.

9.1.3.3 The workers' committee shall be capable of operating on-site, free from farm management interference.

9.1.3.4 There shall be no sign of worker retaliation or discrimination due to collective bargaining.

9.2 PROHIBITION OF FORCED LABOUR (ILO 29 & 105)

9.2.1 Forced labour, including bonded or involuntary prison labour, does not occur.

9.2.1.1 There is no evidence of forced labour.

9.2.1.2 No recruitment fee or any charges or any deposits of valuables or identity papers shall not be retained by member.

9.2.1.3 Salaries or wages shall not be retained by the member farmers/ginner for the purpose of forcing workers to stay.

9.2.1.4 Workers shall be free to leave their workplace if appropriately notified.

9.2.1.5 Spouses work voluntarily and on a separate contract basis.



9.3 PROHIBITION OF CHILD LABOUR (ILO 138)

9.3.1 Children are not employed (contracted) below the age of 14.

- 9.3.1.1 The minimum age of children employed by member farmers shall not be less than the age of completion of compulsory schooling, and in any case, shall not be less than 14.
- 9.3.1.2 Policies and procedures to prevent that children below the age of 14 are employed by are in place and under custody of the implementing body.

9.3.2 Working does not jeopardies schooling or the social, moral, or physical development of the young person.

- 9.3.2.1 Member farmers and ginners ensure that working does not jeopardise schooling, health, safety and the social, moral, or physical development of workers under the age of 18.
- 9.3.2.2 Children under the age of 15 engaged in joint family labour or neighbourhood services shall only perform work duties which are commensurate to their age, and under custody and guidance of their parents or relatives.
- 9.3.2.3 Children under the age of 15 engaged in joint family labour or neighbourhood services shall do so only after school or during holidays.

9.4 PROHIBITION OF WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOUR (ILO 182)

9.4.1 Worst forms of child labour do not occur.

- 9.4.1.1 There shall be no evidence of trafficked, bonded, forced or abused labour.

9.4.2 Monitoring, evaluation and response mechanisms exist.

- 9.4.2.1 Incidences of worst and regular forms of child labour shall be documented.
- 9.4.2.2 An action plan to prevent, monitor and remediate child labour is implemented, documented, and followed up.



9.5 WARRANTY OF OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY

9.5.1 The farm must provide workers in all work areas with the basic services, resources and working conditions necessary to comply with the occupational health and safety program objectives.

- 9.5.1.1 A safe and hygienic working environment shall be provided, bearing in mind the prevailing knowledge of seed cotton production and ginning, and of any specific hazards. Adequate steps shall be taken to prevent accidents and injury to health arising out of, associated with, or occurring in the course of work, by minimising, so far as is reasonably practicable, the causes of hazards inherent in the working environment.
- 9.5.1.2 Workers shall receive regular and recorded health and safety training, and such training shall be repeated for new or reassigned workers.
- 9.5.1.3 Gin factories shall provide first aid services and emergency health care free of charge for work-related injuries to workers and supervisors.
- 9.5.1.4 First aid boxes shall be accessible at any time at the farm/workplace. The boxes shall be fully equipped and in good shape.

- 9.5.1.5 In all farms, potable drinking water is accessible to all workers during their working period.
- 9.5.1.6 Personnel that apply or handle agrochemicals or perform any other hazardous work shall be provided with the necessary protective equipment.
- 9.5.1.7 Storage areas for agrochemicals must comply with basic safety standards.



9.6 EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS

9.6.1 Workers are aware of their rights and duties, responsibilities, salaries, and work schedules.

- 9.6.1.1 All workers employed > three months shall have legally binding labour contracts defining rights and duties, responsibilities, work schedules, and wages/salaries.
- 9.6.1.2 Workers employed > three months shall receive copies of, or have access to, the contracts signed by both parties.
- 9.6.1.3 Payment shall be made in legal tender.
- 9.6.1.4 Payments shall be made on time, according to an appropriate payment schedule that has been communicated to workers employed by the farmer.
- 9.6.1.5 In farms with > 10 full or part-time permanent employees, an up-to-date written payroll and job description for each employee shall be available providing a clear account of wages earned, as well as, if applicable, of allowances, bonuses, overtime payment, and all deductions in detail.
- 9.6.1.6 The legal provisions for social insurance, leave practices, and overtime are followed.

9.6.2 Work – including subcontracted work – is equally remunerated according to the type of work provided and for both genders alike.

- 9.6.2.1 Payment of workers contracted by the farmer shall either be in line with or exceeding sector Collective Bargaining Agreements, or correspond to the regional average and/or official minimum wages for similar occupations.
- 9.6.2.2 Payment shall be in minimum equal to the country or region-specific stipulated benchmark for living wages.
- 9.6.2.3 Women pay shall be equal to their male counterpart for the same type of work provided.
- 9.6.2.4 The pay rate shall allow subcontracted workers who are remunerated based on production quotas, or piecework, to earn the proportionate minimum wage or relevant industry average (whichever is higher) during normal working hours.
- 9.6.2.5 Working hours are not excessive, and are in line with national or local legislation, in terms of overtime and remuneration.

9.6.3 Deductions in salaries are only made as agreed by national laws, as fixed by a Collective Bargaining Agreement or if the employee has given his/her written consent.

- 9.6.3.1 Deductions of salaries are in line with national laws and/or the Collective Bargaining Agreement (if applicable).
- 9.6.3.2 Deductions are not employed as disciplinary measures.
- 9.6.3.3 When deductions are made for services provided by the farmer, they shall be in line with the actual costs incurred by the employer.



9.7 NO DISCRIMINATION IN THE WORKPLACE (ILO 111)

9.7.1 Any form of discrimination or abuse is absent.

- 9.7.1.1 There is no discrimination made on the basis of race, caste, national origin, religion, disability, gender, sexual orientation, union, membership, political affiliation, or age in recruitment, remuneration, access to training, promotion, disciplinary measures, termination or retirement.
- 9.7.1.2 The organisation and the members do not engage in or support the use of corporal punishment, mental or physical coercion and verbal abuse.

9.7.2 Grievance mechanisms

- 9.7.2.1 A grievance mechanism shall be implemented and made accessible to farmers, workers, and other individuals potentially affected by the organisation's work. The design and functionality of the mechanism is effective.

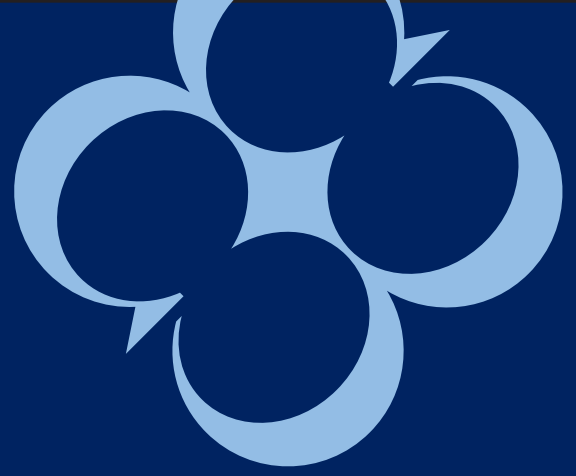
9.8 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

9.8.1 The organisation fosters the social and economic development of farmers, female farmers and farmers' wives through the creation of Farmer Business Groups, Women in Cotton projects, and other entrepreneurial initiatives at communal level.

- 9.8.1.1 Farmer Business Groups shall be established at communal level to improve the economic resilience of member farmers.
- 9.8.1.2 Entrepreneurial initiatives shall be developed at communal level to diversify sources of income for farmers.

9.8.2 Programmes related to disadvantaged/minority groups among the farmer workforce, in particular women, are in place to improve their position.

- 9.8.2.1 Women in REEL cotton projects shall be enhanced at the community level to improve the position of female farmers and farmer wives.
-



Section 3: Glossary

Glossary

AGROBIODIVERSITY

Agrobiodiversity is the variety of animals, plants and microorganisms that are used directly or indirectly for agriculture, including crops, livestock, and forestry. It comprises the diversity of genetic resources used for food, fodder and fibre production. It also includes the diversity of non-harvested species that support the production e.g., soil microorganisms, predators and pollinators as well as the diversity of agro-ecosystems.

AGROECOLOGY

Agroecology is an ecological approach to agriculture that views agricultural areas as ecosystems and is concerned about with the ecological impact of agricultural practices.

AGROFORESTRY

Agroforestry is a collective name for land-use systems and technologies where woody perennials (trees, shrubs, palms, bamboos, etc.) are deliberately used on the same land-management units as agricultural crops and/or animals, in some form of spatial arrangement or temporal sequence.

BIODIVERSITY

Biodiversity is a term used to describe the enormous variety of life on Earth. It can be used more specifically to refer to all of the species in one region or ecosystem.

Biodiversity refers to every living thing, including plants, animals, humans, and microorganisms in the soil.

BIO MAGNIFICATION

Condition where the chemical concentration in an organism exceeds the concentration of its food when the major exposure route occurs from the organism's diet.

BT COTTON

BT (*Bacillus thuringiensis*) cotton is a genetically modified organism (GMO) or genetically modified pest resistant plant cotton variety, which produces an insecticide to combat bollworm.

CARBON SEQUESTRATION

Carbon sequestration is the process of capturing and storing atmospheric carbon dioxide. It is one method of reducing the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere with the goal of reducing global climate change.

CHEMICAL FERTILISERS

Synthetic fertilisers like urea, di-ammonium phosphate, murate of potash etc.

CHEMICAL PESTICIDES

Synthetic pesticides like acephate, ethion etc.

CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION & MITIGATION

Climate change adaptation refers to actions that reduce the negative impact of climate change, while taking advantage of potential new opportunities.

Adaptation (responding to climate impacts) and mitigation (reducing GHG emissions) are necessary complements in addressing climate change.

COC

Code of conduct.

CONTROL FARMERS

Control farmers are the Non-REEL project farmers who are all being used as reference to benchmark Project farmers.

COVER CROP

Cover crop is a crop grown for the protection and enrichment of the soil and increased retention capacity of water in the soil.

CROP ROTATION

Crop rotation is the practice of planting different crops sequentially on the same plot of land to improve soil health, optimise nutrients in the soil, and combat pest and weed pressure.

DEMONSTRATION PLOT

A demonstration plot is a field that can be used to teach, experiment, and share ideas about agricultural practices.

ECOLOGICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Ecological infrastructure refers to naturally functioning ecosystems that deliver valuable services to people, such as water and climate regulation, soil formation and disaster risk reduction.

ECOLOGY

Branch of biology that deals with the relations of organisms to one another and to their physical surroundings.

ECOSYSTEM

A community or group of living organisms that live in and interact with each other in a specific environment.

FFB

Farmers field book.

FPO

A farmer producer organisation (FPO), formed by a group of farm producers, is a registered body with producers as shareholders of the organisation. It deals with business activities related to farm produce and works for the benefit of member producers.

FYM

Farm yard manure.

GM SEED

Genetically modified seed.

HABITAT

A habitat is the place where an organism lives.

IMS

Integrated management system.

INM

Integrated nutrition management.

INTERCROP

Intercropping is the practice of growing two or more crops in proximity. Like pigeon pea or green gram with cotton crop.

IP

Implementing partner.

IPM

Integrated pest management.

IWM

Integrated water management.

MEL

Monitoring, evaluation and learning.

MIX CROPPING

A system of sowing two or three crops together on the same land, one being the main crop and the others the subsidiaries.

NATURAL HABITAT

A natural habitat is an ecological area (on or beyond the farm) where specific species live.

NICHE

Niche is that organism's role within that environment.

NITROGEN IMMOBILIZATION

Nitrogen immobilisation refers to the process in which nitrate and ammonium are taken up by soil organisms and therefore become unavailable to crops. When the microorganisms die, the organic N contained in their cells is converted by mineralisation and nitrification to plant available nitrate.

PASTURE LAND

Pastures are those lands that are primarily used for the production of adapted, domesticated forage plants for livestock.

PEST SCOUTING

The term 'pest scouting' as it applies to the area of agriculture can be defined as 'inspecting a field for pests, including insects, weeds, and pathogens.' Pest scouting is a basic component of integrated pest management programmes.

PHEROMONE TRAP

Pheromones are chemicals used by insects and other animals to communicate with each other. Insects send these chemical signals to help attract mates, warn others of predators, or find food. Using specific pheromones, traps can be used to monitor target pests in agriculture or in residential areas.

POLLINATORS

A pollinator is anything (insects, birds & animals) that helps carry pollen from the male part of the flower (stamen) to the female part of the same or another flower (stigma). The movement of pollen must occur for the plant to become fertilised and produce fruits, seeds, and young plants.

PRODUCER GROUP

Group of farmers producing REEL Cotton.

PROJECT FARMERS

Project farmers are the REEL Cotton project farmers

REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE

Regenerative agriculture is a system of farming practices that intends to increase agrobiodiversity, enrich soils, improve water management and enhance ecosystems services. It offers a long-term sustainable farming system that provides resilience against climate instability, diversified incomes and better livelihoods for farmers.

REDUCED TILLAGE

Reduced tillage or conservation tillage is a practice of minimising soil disturbance and allowing crop residue or stubble to remain on the ground instead of being thrown away or incorporated into the soil. With less tilling, farmers save on machinery use, fuel, labour, and their own time.

REEL

Responsible Environment Enhanced Livelihood.

REEL COTTON

Cotton produced out of the REEL programme farmers.

RIPARIAN BUFFER

Riparian buffer is a vegetated area located near a stream, which helps shade and partially protect the stream from the impact of adjacent land uses. Benefits include the filtering of leached nutrients, reduced flooding and providing of habitat and reduced erosion.

RESILIENCE

The ability of a community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate, and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner.

SALINISATION

The process of increasing the salt content is known as salinisation.

SOIL HEALTH

Soil health is the soil's ability to function and sustain plants, animals and humans as part of the ecosystem. The diversity of microorganisms plays a crucial role in soil functioning.

SOIL ORGANIC MATTER

Soil organic matter (SOM) is the organic matter component of soil, consisting of plant and animal detritus at various stages of decomposition, cells and tissues of soil microbes, and substances that soil microbes synthesise. SOM also acts as a major sink and source of soil carbon.

SOIL SALINITY

Soil salinity is the salt content in the soil.

SPECIES/SPECIES RICHNESS

Species richness (S) is the number of species within a defined region.

TOC

Theory of change.

TOF

Training of farmers.

TOG

Training of ginners.

TOT

Training of trainers.

TRAP CROP

Trap crop planted to attract insect pests from another crop, especially one in which the pests fail to survive or reproduce. Like China rose in cotton farm.

WILDLIFE CORRIDOR

The term 'wildlife corridor' is used to refer to any linear feature in the landscape that can be used for migration or dispersal of wildlife. Wildlife or biological corridors offer the possibility of linking habitats and reducing the isolation of populations.

YELLOW STICKY TRAP

Yellow sticky traps are a commonly used method for population monitoring of many pests.

Annexure

REEL Cotton List of Prohibited Chemicals

REEL Cotton disallows the use of any materials defined by the following protocols or governance bodies. Please consult the links below for an updated list of the prohibited substances.



WHO

The WHO recommended classification of pesticides by hazard, of which:

1. Extremely hazardous (Class Ia); and
2. Highly hazardous (Class Ib)

<https://www.who.int/publications> or
<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240005662>



POP

Stockholm Convention on persistent organic pollutants (POPs), of which:
Annex I and Annex II

<https://echa.europa.eu/list-of-substances-subject-to-pops-regulation> or
<http://chm.pops.int/Convention/ConventionText/tabid/2232/Default.aspx>

PIC

Prior Informed Consent (PIC) procedure for certain hazardous chemicals and pesticides
In international trade under the Rotterdam Convention, of which: Annex III

<https://echa.europa.eu/information-on-chemicals/pic/chemicals> or
<http://www.pic.int/TheConvention/Overview/TextoftheConvention/tabid/1048/language/en-US/Default.aspx>



MONTREAL

Montreal Protocol on substances that deplete the ozone layer

<https://ozone.unep.org/treaties/montreal-protocol>



CottonConnect is a company with a social purpose to reimagine the cotton supply chains and help textile producers and farmers enjoy better livelihoods.

CottonConnect • Tel: +44 (0) 203 865 7038 • www.cottonconnect.org
WeWork, 22 Long Acre, London WC2E 9LY